

# White Mountain Wildlife & Nature Center, Inc.

## SUMMARY OF PROGRESS 2007-2012



The Nature Center offers outdoor, nature-based education and recreational activities that foster an appreciation of nature and our valuable natural resources. Over the past 5 years, our activities have grown substantially, contributing significantly to our area's important tourism-based economy. The community's continuing support is vital for us to be able to add to our accomplishments since 2007:

- **Nature Discovery Programs** – We've now offered 40 hands-on summer *Nature Discovery* programs attended by over 12,000 people the past 4 years, with our diverse programs offering meaningful hands-on educational activities, enrichment, and family-oriented fun, as well as local economic impact.
- **Woodland Wildlife Festival** – The Nature Center has partnered with the Pinetop-Lakeside Chamber of Commerce for 3 years in planning and hosting the annual *Woodland Wildlife Festival* along with several agencies and organizations. The 2012 fair was attended by 1,000 people.
- **Kids Kamp** – In cooperation with all 4 Navajo County Junior Leadership Academies, we've hosted 3 annual day camps with presentations, hands-on activities, and service projects for area at-risk youth (85 last year), making a significant impact in their lives; we're already planning this year's camp.
- **Interpretative Display Programs** – We completed 2 interpretive display and signage projects. A grant from the U.S. Forest Service allowed us to develop interpretive signage and classroom materials on forest heath and wildfire risk reduction. A U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service grant allowed us to create a wetland habitat with interpretive signage and a viewing platform. We've initiated 2 new projects: a Forest Service grant to upgrade the adjacent Big Springs Environmental Study Area and its interpretive brochure, and an Arizona Game and Fish Department grant in cooperation with Pinetop-Lakeside to develop a regional on-line wildlife viewing and ecotourism guide.
- **Educator Workshops** – In the past 3 years, we have hosted numerous educators' workshops to support and facilitate balanced science education in our area schools, as well as several student field excursions to learn about the area's valuable natural resources, including the 2011 water festival attended by 600 area 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders.
- **Wildlife Rehabilitation** – Two Nature Center Board members are licensed rehabilitators that provide valuable volunteer wildlife rehabilitation for the area. Susan Taggart rehabilitates everything from raccoons to bald eagles for return to the wild, while Dewain Bartimus does reptile and amphibian rehabilitation and educational programs for the *White Mountain Reptile and Amphibian Rescue*.
- **Fostering Partnerships** – The Nature Center has expanded its scope of influence by partnering with a multitude of organizations, including many area businesses. Last year, we cooperated on several successful workshops and seminars, improved our loop trail with help from Pinetop-Lakeside TRACKS, partnered with Save Our Park, Inc. on the annual *Walk for the Woods/National Trails Day* event, and partnered with several organizations to offer programs.

